

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1989

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SID AHMED

1. ON JUNE 30 I CALLED ON MOHAMED SID AHMED, THE
AHAM JOURNALIST WHO HAS PLAYED ROLE OF ZAYYAT'S
SPOKESMAN SINCE ZAYYAT RETURNED FROM SECURITY COUN-
CIL MEETING. I ASKED SID AHMED ABOUT REASONS FOR
ZAYYAT'S STATEMENTS AT SECURITY COUNCIL ON PALESTINIAN
STATE. SID AHMED REPLIED THAT ZAYYAT HAD RAISED ISSUE
IN THE HOPE OF FINDING A WAY AROUND THE AMBIGUITY IN
RESOLUTION 242 CONCERNING ISRAEL'S FUTURE BOUNDARIES.
SINCE THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION
BETWEEN THE VARIOUS CONCERNED PARTIES ON THIS QUES-
TION, ZAYYAT HAD ATTEMPTED TO GO BACK IN TIME TO
ESTABLISH LEGAL BASIS IS 1947 PARTITION RESOLUTION
WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THIS
RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, REFERRED TO THE PARTITION OF
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PALESTINE WITHIN THE THEN GENERALLY ESTABLISHED AND

RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES OF PALESTINE. IT OBVIOUSLY MADE NO REFERENCE TO BOUNDARIES FOR THE JEWISH STATE OUTSIDE OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, AND ZAYYAT WISHED TO POINT OUT THAT ANY ISRAELI CLAIM TO LAND OUTSIDE OF PALESTINIAN MANDATE TERRITORY HAD NO LEGAL BASIS WHATSOEVER. FOR THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE 1947 PARTITION RESOLUTION, ISRAEL'S CLAIM TO LAND INSIDE THE PALESTINIAN MANDATE HAD A LEGAL BASIS, BUT SO DID THE CLAIMS OF THE NON-JEWISH INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE. THE NON-JEWISH INHABITANTS WERE THUS ENTITLED TO THEIR SHARE OF THE MANDATE TERRITORY AND THIS IS WHY ZAYYAT HAD MENTIONED A PALESTINIAN STATE. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE NATURE OF SUCH A STATE. THIS IS THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. ZAYYAT ONLY SAID THAT EGYPT WOULD ACCEPT THE WISHES OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THIS REGARD. THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY EXCLUDE A FEDERATION WITH JORDAN IF THIS IS WHAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WANT.

2. I THEN ASKED SID AHMED ABOUT HIS JUNE 10 ARTICLE IN WHICH HE HAD DESIGNATED THE PLO AS THE PROPER ORGANIZATION TO REPRESENT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. SID AHMED EXPOUNDED AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH ON THE REASONS FOR THIS ARTICLE. HE SAID NO PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM CAN COME ABOUT IF THE PALESTINIANS ARE IGNORED. THEY HAVE A CAPABILITY FOR EXPLOITING SOURCES OF TENSION IN THE AREA. AMONG THESE ARE THE INCREASING CLASH OF INTERESTS BETWEEN OIL PRODUCING AND OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES, THE CLASH BETWEEN SOVIET-ORIENTED STATES SUCH AS IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN AND US-ORIENTED STATES SUCH AS IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US-ORIENTED STATES OF IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WHICH INVOLVE THE OIL-RICH BUT WEAK ARAB STATES LYING BETWEEN. THERE ARE MANY PALESTINIANS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED IN THESE COUNTRIES WHO ARE RELATIVELY WELL EDUCATED AND SOPHISTICATED, AND WHO WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO PLAY UPON THESE UNDERLYING SOURCES OF TENSION. BY RECOGNIZING A PLO THAT COULD REPRESENT A BROAD BASE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, EGYPT WOULD BE ABLE TO REDUCE SUPPORT FOR THE MORE EXTREMIST ELEMENTS AMONG THE PALESTINIANS.

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TINIANIS AND THEREBY REDUCE THEIR CAPABILITY FOR FUTURE TROUBLE MAKING. SID AHMED SAID THAT THESE IDEAS WERE HIS AND HE WAS NOT CERTAIN HOW FAR ZAYYAT SHARED IN THEM.

3. IN DISCUSSING EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, SID AHMED SAID EGYPT SHOULD NOW WRITE OFF THE IDEA THAT IT CAN EXERT ANY LEVERAGE OVER THE UNITED STATES BY THREATENING A WAR THAT MIGHT BRING THE US INTO CONFLICT WITH THE

SOVIET UNION. HOWEVER, EGYPT STILL NEEDED SOVIET
SUPPORT, BE IT POLITICAL, MILITARY OR ECONOMIC, AND
HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR EGYPT TO TAKE ANY
ACTION TO PROVOKE THE SOVIET UNION AT THIS TIME.
WILEY

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